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VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV: THE PHILOSOPHY OF GODMANHOOD

It would be hard to find in other national cultures a thinker described by as many and as different names. Vladimir Solovyov was referred to as the *Russian Socrates*, *Russian Origen*, *Russian Francis*, *Russian Thomas (Aquinas)*, *Russian Schelling*; indeed, they could likewise have called him the *Russian Spinoza*, *Russian Kant*, *Russian Hegel* or *Russian Schopenhauer*. That would be no exaggeration, though, or interpretive confusion. Solovyov, widely believed to have been Russia's *first professional* philosopher, was stunningly successful in merging mutually opposite legacies of 19th-century Russian thought (Chaadaev, Slavophilism, occidentalism, Yurkevitch) and, even more important, linking them up to all substantial currents in European philosophy. In that respect, Solovyov was a truly outstanding *final word* of 19th-century Russian philosophy.

But the supreme quality of his synthesis made him the immediate predecessor and intellectual prophet of a true Pleiad of 20th-century Russian thinkers. No matter what divergent positions they held, they all were in no doubt as to the Solovyovean roots of their thinking. Nikolay Berdayev, Sergey Bulgakov, Pavel Florenski, Lev Karsavin, Lev Shestov, Nikolay Losski, Vassily Rozanov are some of the names to mention. Not even Russian Marxism tradition was entirely alien to Solovyov. The idea of what was called bogostroitelstvo, *god-building*, fostered by a group of Marxists with a humanist bent (Bogdanov, Lunacharski, Bazarow, Gorki), fitted quite well into the Solovyovean wake, as did the motif of activism and Prometheism that long pervaded Russian Marxism (see, apart from the bogostroitel, in certain texts by Lenin, Trotsky, or Preobrazhensky). It was only Stalin's Marxism, intellectually a medley of platitudes and schematism, that ousted Solovyov and the style of thinking derived from him definitely outside the boundaries of the vanguard ideology.

Perhaps Solovyov's place in the history of Russian thought can best be illustrated by invoking the symbolic meaning of the hourglass, wherein sand from an upper bulb unstoppably flows through the narrowest point in the middle to the lower part of the instrument, marked by that tight pass as a necessary determinant of its new location. Solovyov would thus be that narrow, central, crucial and most *critical* point in the hourglass through which 19th-century Russian thought *sieves* into the 20th century.

The idea of Godmanhood predetermines, in our view, Solovyov's philo-

sophy. It imparts the philosophical personality of our protagonist its identity, and it is in Godmanhood's perspective that its successive stages and concretisation of the Godmanhood ought to be interpreted, namely the other notions usually invoked as specific of Solovyov's thought or as adequately describing his position: mysticism, integrity, all-unity, Sophia, theocracy, Christian policies, liberalism, catastrophism. This is not to say, though, that this supreme idea of Godmanhood, was continuously and permanently an object of Solovyov's philosophical-religious inquiries. Next to spells of time, and works, clearly dominated by its spectacular supremacy (in particular think of the famous *Lectures on Godmanhood*), one can easily find texts and moments in which the idea recedes into the backdrop, indeed even behind it; yet even so is Godmanhood the idea that defines – from the metaphysical background or else from the thinker's subconscious (and the less ostensibly the more pervasively perhaps) – the design and object of Solovyov's philosophy.

Let us try to set out the substance Solovyov put in the idea of *Godmanhood*. This is no easy exercise: for one, the notion has a provocative (religious and intellectual) ring to it; secondly, it spans a wide stretch between its extremities; thirdly, the notion has a religious, and specifically a Christological, context, which has implications for the most mysterious, intellectually impenetrable aspect of Christology (incarnation and resurrection); and, fourth and last, because of other numerous and diverse philosophical and cultural contexts Solovyov used to link the idea to and as such they have to be taken into account in connection with Solovyov's philosophy. The above reservations are not intended as a plea for leniency in the face of attempts to provide a precise definition of the sense of the idea; rather, they are meant to highlight the circumstance that what is at stake here is the definition itself of methodological rigour of fine-tuning the precise definition, to underscore that anyone taking up such a challenge is essentially doomed to *start at the beginning*, with all the risk that holds, even though also with a sense – technically at least – of walking the right domain: of philosophy as knowledge precisely of *things that are at the beginning*.

As a convenient point of departure for a presentation and interpretation of Solovyov's *Godmanhood* let us take his debut article on *The mythological process in ancient paganism*. The term Godmanhood itself is not used explicitly there, yet the perspective and intellectual tendency of the text, next to the author's youthful assertiveness and passionate craving of knowledge, point to the essential meaning of the notion we are exploring¹. This reference to his debut article, it may be noticed, is useful for the structure of our presentation of Solovyov's philosophy: for, the very notion that underlies his philosophical personality is there right away, almost immediately, at the beginning of his thinking, and even though its full-fledged conceptualised form shows up a bit later, it already does point to the identity of his personality, to the uniqueness of his personality.

¹ The view that Solovyov's first major article is of great importance is supported by Alexey Losyev, who believed the text by the still young philosopher was of great significance for the development of all his philosophy. Cf. A. F. Losyev, *Vl. Solovyov*, Moskva 1994, p. 169.

Solovyov begins with the proposition that the ancient world knew no principle of intellectual life other than, and independent of, religion. So by explaining the religious principle one can define and get insight in the entirety of pagan societies' mind and life. What strikes the eye of the beholder everywhere is the naturalist origin of all religions. But what exactly did ancient man perceive in nature, Solovyov pondered, that he made it an object of cult? That perspective must have been essentially different from the present one¹. Dismissing previous tentative replies to the question as schematic and superficial, Solovyov put forward his own interpretation as a description of the development of religious awareness in antiquity.

He held the common view that polytheism was supposedly the inceptive and natural form of ancient religiousness as wrong. Indeed, even the earliest evidence of ancient religiousness, that on Vedism and pre-Vedist religions, can clearly be read as evidence of a monotheist view of divinity. Polytheistic leanings began to appear, and indeed grow, only later.

Polytheism comes up in result of man's refusal to accept the radical gulf separating him, in early monotheism, from God. God's transcendence was absolute in early monotheism, which expressed, on the one hand, man's intention to perceive the world as a unity over his utterly disappointing temporality, and, on the other, the utter uselessness of that intention (because of the absolute incongruity of God and the world) for comprehending the temporal world. The world was being put under a question mark, depleting it of its sense and substance. That was a case of a passive, mutually exclusive either-or (either the unity of god – or the chaos of the world); as Solovyov put it: what was absent there was *a free, moral relationship, an inner unity of man with god*, a relationship characterising *true religion*².

In its subsequent development ancient religion was an attempt to bridge that gulf separating god from the world and man; or, to put it differently, it was an attempt to identify forms of god's manifestation in the world, and thus to restrict, in a sense, his radical separateness, his transcendence, towards the world. The one domain where god could manifest himself then was the world of natural phenomena, and indeed it was in that domain that people in antiquity did look for manifestations or signs of divinity. That introduced in the then going vision of god as a unity, a duality, an inner tension, which – we might add to Solovyov's reflections – blunted the radicality, to some extent, of the initial gulf between god and the world.

The duality was that, on the one hand, god was the old unity, yet at the same time he was defined by the principle of material manifestation. Next to him, yet also in him, there appeared mother-matter, the feminine side of divinity, yet at the same time the principle of the natural world. She became the source of polytheism, the mother of gods, and it was from her that the elements of nature and forces of the natural world emerged. Creative energy allows her, Solovyov points out, an increasingly pronounced autonomy vis-à-

¹ V. S. Solovyov, *Mifologicheski process v drevnyem yazychestvye* [*The mythological process in ancient paganism*] in: V. S. Solovyov, *Sobranye sochinenia* [*Collected studies*], t. 1, Brussels 1966, pp. 1–2.

² V. S. Solovyov, *Mifologicheski process v drevnyem yazychestvye*, p. 10.

vis God–unity; the duality of divinity is more and more visible in ancient religions: on the one hand, then, there is – goddess–night, goddess–matter, and on the other hand – the purely spiritual, moral god–father, god–fire. That duality becomes eventually self–evident and calls for no reflection as a necessary basis for further splits, more dualities getting closer and closer to temporalities and increasingly often relying on the reality of the senses, and setting up human awareness for polytheistic religion. At the same time, monotheism leaves a distinct track behind it: the masculine god had not yet surrendered to dependence on the material world; one expression of its freedom is his role as holder–of–lightning, an unpredictable, vehement judge of the world, whose rulings seem willful and erratic to people. There too, the transcendence of God is extant, albeit in weakened form. And transcendence is curtailed step by step.

The above–outlined process – repeated here after Solovyov – of God’s duality deepening and becoming more precisely redefined, ends up in the figures of Zeus (the Greeks) and Indra (in Hinduism); which does not bring the process to halt but indeed opens a new period for it. It moves away from god as holder–of–lightning and towards god–sun, from a uranic to a solar periods. The masculine god gets its areas of freedom and willfulness curtailed one by one. As the sun it is subject to permanent rules, manifest to the world as a law of nature that is absolute yet predictable, knowable, indeed free to use for man’s own ends. That stage of the mythological process is best represented by Apollo, a figure Solovyov points to mentioning yet another feature the god–sun develops: suffering. That goes along with the further growth of the role of the feminine god. Solovyov writes, *Kronos still keeps Rhea „in yoke”, Zeus falls in love and thus surrendering part of the rule over himself to the feminine principle; Apollo has to chase a contemptuous nymph, and finally Hercules lets Omphale thumb his nose.*¹

Ancient paganism thus entered a last, third, period in which god shows no signs of transcendence at all. It melts in material nature, becoming less and less external towards man, almost entering him, but then merging with that only which is organic in man, with his animal nature, and not with his moral personality. That way the initial gulf between God and man and the world has been buried almost entirely, and the result thereof is the god of organic life or else – and more pertinently perhaps – the divinity of organic life. After god–the–holder–of–lightning and god–sun, the phallic god (Dionysus, Shiva, Adonis) enters the stage of pagan religiousness; thus completing its development.

The gulf between God and man, we can sum up Solovyov’s argument, was buried so completely that did not leave a trace of man’s original religious concern. The transcendent, dead *unity* of God changed to a constantly reborn yet also constantly dying *uniqueness* of nature, also absorbing man himself. *Man cannot accept such religion*, Solovyov predicates². His predicate is justified insofar as the effect of mythological development he points to negates the

¹ V. S. Solovyov, *Mifologicheski process v drevnyem yazychestvye*, p. 20.

² V. S. Solovyov, *Mifologicheski process v drevnyem yazychestvye*, p. 22.

starting-point of the process, which was man's self-reference to something higher than nature. Rather than concretised, man's self-reference was annulled.

As said before, the text discussed here does not contain the notion of Godmanhood. However, the issues debated, their dynamics and the underlying tension, and lastly the constraints of that dynamics and Solovyov's own remark that they will be overcome in future (meaning the dynamics and tension not only the issues discussed but indeed the text itself of Solovyov), seem excellently suitable to attempt a first conceptualisation of the idea of Godmanhood. If the idea of Godmanhood has *first* to be conceptualised in his debut *The mythological process in ancient paganism*, the on the other hand – it precisely *has to be* conceptualised, because of the intense intuition of Godmanhood found in Solovyov's article; because of the obvious present tendency that will come to be phrased as a problem (albeit not resolved) several years on in his *Lectures on Godmanhood*.

The idea of Godmanhood, in our view, would thus include the following contents:

a) Man does not suffice for himself, not even together with the surrounding natural world; asking himself a question about himself man comes across god as an idea transcending any particularity, temporariness, limitation, as a postulate of absoluteness, as a project imparting meaning to his striving, dream, ideal infinity and immortality. This attitude finds realisation in a real, one and transcendent god, seen not as a construct of human consciousness but as its discovery, an enslaving self-evidence of those spheres of thinking where the ultimate questions are being asked. The idea of Godmanhood may turn up only in monotheistic religions, in which transcendence and unity of god are sufficiently warranted. This accounts for the importance Solovyov ascribed to the original monotheist character of pagan religiousness.

b) But god does not suffice for himself, either. On the one hand, god is absolute unity, perfection sans fault, and so in need of nothing; on the other hand, however, god is the maker of the world, which bears witness to the world of a need for something to exist except for god, something god needs, something that overcomes what is lacking. History of religion does know of attempts of course to bypass this awkward problem; that used to be done, slightly simplifying one can say that could be done in either of two ways: a naturalist (or, in a more subtle sense: pantheistic) way, where god was equated with the world or chosen elements of the world, or in a dualist approach (a religion of light and darkness, or, in a more subtle sense: Manicheism), where the world played a significant autonomous role that did not *involve god* in cosmic struggles of Good with Evil. Either of these ways, whatever valuable and often intellectually intriguing aspects there may be to them – did negate the basic, definitional, so to say, characteristics of God as a transcendent entity and as unity (the only one). Godmanhood may therefore come up in this connection only where god's separation from the world is maintained, where these notions present a problem to define and concretise, and not a difficulty to dodge. Godmanhood seems to be much more efficient than All-unity or Sophia as a safeguard against the threat of pantheism, which were, and are, being

put out as charges against Solovyov on several occasions yet which are ultimately not accurate; among other things, this is why we unfold our vision of Solovyov's thought as the philosophy of Godmanhood, rather than as a philosophy of all-unity. This too, we hold, is the correct interpretation of Solovyov's view of the progressing identification of divinity with organic life in his original article – as a move back, a dead end.

c) The real result of the relation between man's orientation towards the absolute and the unity and transcendence of the absolute is a gulf, a crack, a gap, a discontinuity between man and god. It is that gap that is the adequate space for the idea of Godmanhood to materialise; that would be the space of god, which could step outside itself without detracting its divinity in any way, and of man, who by stepping outside himself does not abandon, but indeed realises, his manhood. That space would not be a medley, an indefinite homogeneity, a synthesis reducing its components, releasing itself from those components. Nor would it be a sphere of a vague dream, of elevated emotion, a mysterious encounter of the divine with the human. Indeed, we would think that it is precisely the negation of the gap, a desire to bypass it or move it away, that furnishes room for praise or natural emotion (intuitive and emotional link to daily reality, otherwise quite efficient in practical life), or for mystical emotion, interpreted in a way negating temporality and promising a leap over to transcendence. To Solovyov, that Godmanhood gulf or gap is a space that is multi-tier, differentiated, concrete, where even emotion is just one step away from intellectual conceptualisation, whereas intellectual thinking is sensitive to the whole complexity of observing the world and the sophisticated multi-dimensionality of the human entity, hiding behind the sphere of emotion. So, it is not by chance that in his youthful article Solovyov focuses practically all his attention on the identified gulf between god and the world and man in pagan religiousness, to proceed to showing the dynamism, multifariousness, structuring, and also its liability to intellectual conceptualisation, of the gulf.

d) The liability to intellectual conceptualisation – it will be noted – holds not only to the *pattern*, the structure, of the gap discussed here; but to a much wider extent to its dynamics, development, for this has the dimension of historicity, which for its part is guided by its specific logic. That is in Solovyov a logic clearly of Hegelian provenance, with its distinctive triadic rhythm of development, specific as it is not of linear, infinite, negative development, but of purposeful, meaningful, development, one that is defined by an idea that finds and affirms itself in externality. The outstanding skill, ingenuity, indeed finesse, Solovyov applied in handling the figure of the triad, and at the same time the huge heuristic power explaining away a majority of his triadic constructions, put him not only among pre-eminent disciples but indeed competitors of Hegel. This particular aspect of the Godmanhood can easily be observed in *The mythological process in ancient paganism*. The gulf underwent a string of shapings following one another with inevitable logic in a triad rhythm, and a two-tier triad: 1) The original monotheism with the dominance of god-unity; 2) The feminine principle inspiring a move towards polytheism; 3) The self-definition of god-unity towards a differentiating world: a) as god-

holder—of—lightning, b) as god—sun, c) as phallic god.

e) The complexity, concreteness, richness of the gulf between man and god; Solovyov's constant striving for structuring, rather than for homogeneity, in it, to define the fullest possible definition of its pervasive religious emotionality, of subtle shades of that emotionality – all that contributes to the coexistence, commensurability, of philosophy and religion, in the idea of Godmanhood so obviously visible in Solovyov. What is religious in it, may not now or in every case assume a philosophical form, and yet is imbued with philosophy; the richness itself of religious contents calls for transgressing religiousness, for supplementing the intellectual reflection; religion's *implicit* philosophy strives with extraordinary vigour to find *explicit* expression, and proof of the natural nature of such striving is supplied by Solovyov's pervasive belief in all his writings that even the most involved philosophical issues are easy to grasp to every mind (just as the deepest truths of faith are easy to grasp to every heart); that every individual holds them in themselves, and that genuine religious emotionality not only is not at odds with them but indeed lets this universal and necessary philosophical order come to the fore.

It is impossible not to invoke the Socratean *maieutics* as the philosophical paradigm of such an comprehension of human knowledge or even human spirituality without finding thereby superb philosophical models of Solovyov's conception. Analysts of Solovyov very often observed the Socratic roots of his thinking¹. The maieutic aspect of that relationship which is of interest here was noticed above all by A. Losyev, who wrote that one of the toughest and most fundamental philosophical issues, the distinction between being (*bytie*) and existence (*sushcheye*) in Solovyov is so pronounced as to be common sense².

So, the link of religion with philosophy involves the philosophical potency of religious contents, yet on the other hand of course the religious contents or perhaps religious inspiration of philosophical thinking. Without that, in Solovyov's opinion, philosophy is bound to turn into a stopgap, and ultimately always barren, ordinary or else encyclopaedic wisdom, never really providing intellectual satisfaction, a list of mutually exclusive news about facts. Philosophy come up when man had spiritually transgressed the borders of natural being in religion and at the same time is not only incapable of conceptualising the space (gap) ripped open by the transgression but even live out fully. Philosophy does not differ by the scope of its subject from religion; in both areas the idea is to grasp being in its entirety, even though in different, although

¹ A. Nikolski, *Russki Origen XIX veka V. S. Solovyov [Russia's 19th-century Origenes]* in: *Vera i Razum*, t. 2, part 2, Kharkov 1902, pp. 453–454; E. L. Radlov, *Vladimir Solovyov. Zhyn i uchenye [Life and teachings]*, Sankt Petersburg 1913, p. 41 (Radlov writes that the similarity between Solovyov and Socrate comes from their shared religious idea); T. Tyczyński, *Poetyka and sofistyka. O Trzech rozmowach Władymira Solowiowa [Poetics and sophistics. On three conversations of Vladimir Solovyov]* in: *Studia Litteraria Polono-Slavica 1: Srebrny wiek w literaturze rosyjskiej*, Warszawa 1993, pp. 33–34 (Solovyov has the common feature with Socrates, the author says, that both criticise *dark faith* and put it in opposition to a postulated *seeing faith*, reasonable faith, which is precisely the *realisation of Godmanhood*); R. Meier, *Abstrakte Prinzipien und integrales Wissen in den Frühschriften Vladimir Solov'evs*, Bad Salzungen 1969, p. 151.

² A. F. Losyev, *Vladimir Solovyov i yego vremena [Vladimir Solovyov and his times]*, Moskva 1990, p. 125.

necessarily complementary, aspects. There is in Solovyov a dialectic relationship of mutual inspiration and materialisation. In the article we took as the point of departure for our deliberations, Solovyov – having presented the rhythm of development of pagan religiousness, which eventually becomes depleted – shows, as one of the directions of the next stage of development, *philosophical–religious theories of antiquity*¹.

f) The above–indicated dynamism of the gap between god and the world here discussed is characterised by a triadic ordering, yet also a tension, unrest, or even tragedy. The gap is a space of risk, and so one of potential failure. It is one effect of the divine absolute leaving the calm of its unity and self–sufficiency, and by man – of his transgression beyond what he finds unsatisfactory, yet essentially predictable, transparent and realistic sphere of nature. The substantiality of ideal unity, on the one hand, and the reality of matter, on the other, are negated in what is now a shared, *inter–substantial* space of Godmanhood, a space devoid of *guarantee*, a *solid foundation*, permanently threatened (by the absolute determined to return to the calm of unity, or by man pulling out back to the difficult yet *tough* conditions of nature) and threatening (by its *inter–* aspect, the void, the naught). The figure of an ordering triad is in that situation just an abstract and temporary definition (which depletes it of its value in no way) of inquiries of Godhumanhood and strivings going on in the gap. Every one of those definitions bear a mark of failure, yet even in their defeats every one plays a role of historically favourable and intellectually creative mistake; a mistake the fear of committing which would be an even bigger mistake. *The mythological process in ancient paganism* is a particularly valuable text in that sense: for it shows a development process that ends in failure, but also the beginning of the process, its motif is as viable as ever, whereas its solidity, pertinence and logic, make it easy to point out ways out, a new shape of the development, which will be imparting any closed period the rank of an indispensable step, and not of a crude error. As new directions of religious development overcoming the process that ends up in equating divinity with organic life (phallic god), Solovyov names – next to philosophical–religious theories, primarily Greek ones – Zoroastrianism and Buddhism².

g) The limited nature of pagan religiousness Solovyov described in his inaugural article resulted from the impossibility of a different comprehension of man than as a natural being. The conceptualisation of the gulf between god and man – the noticing or rather sensing of which was an achievement of pagan religiousness – was essentially a filling thereof, being essentially a synthesis of the divine with the human such in which the only alternative to the absolute transcendence of God was its absolute immanence; and, accordingly, the deprivation of man of any supernatural dimension, that would elevate him to transcendence. One could break out of the vicious circle, or, more pertinently, the pendulum, of absolute transcendence–absolute immanence perhaps

¹ V. S. Solovyov, *Mifologicheski process v drevnyem yazychestvye*, p. 26.

² Cf. V. S. Solovyov, *Mifologicheski process v drevnyem yazychestvye*.

only by recognising in man a spiritual being. Given such a perspective on man, man was given a certain autonomy, a freedom not only towards what was natural but also what was supernatural (which ceased to be god's exclusive disposal); god, for its part, going beyond its unity, was not doomed beforehand or irrevocably to a passive absorption in an organic entity. A perspective emerged for a unique, original commensurability, for mutual dependence of man and god: a perspective of Godmanhood proper. This enables us to contend that one essential component of the idea of Godmanhood is a personalistic motif making up an interesting counterpoint not only with the transcendence of god and the natural dimension of man, but also with the aforementioned component of the contents of Godmanhood which is the historicity of the space of its materialisation. The lack of a vision of man as a moral personality was recognised in Solovyov's article as a fundamental restriction of the discussed epoch of development of religion, a limitation which may be overcome only by entering an entirely new track of understanding man and his relationship to God. Irrespective of Solovyov's indication of the next ways beyond the existing scheme of religiousness (philosophy, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism), it is easy to see already at this point that Christianity alone will be in a position to satisfy this personalist aspect of the idea of Godmanhood.

h) One feature of the idea of Godmanhood is of extraordinary importance for its right interpretation is its opposition against the idea of man-god. The opposition is present spectacularly in Dostoyevsky's *Devils*¹, it did play, and often continues to play, a major role in the Slavophile and post-Slavophile opposition (noticeable in Solovyov's own writings) of Russia and the West. In that perspective, the West represents the idea of man-god in which god has been reduced to temporal, egoistic, utilitarian needs of Man, moreover claiming to be able to define a final metaphysical truth about man, or perhaps more precisely (which boils down to the same anyway) reducing that metaphysical truth in an irrevocable and definitive way. Russia for its part would represent the world in which the idea of god-man, specific of Christianity, was maintained and kept alive, an idea making possible to keep due distance towards temporality and guaranteeing the comprehension of man as a spiritual being. In the light of the idea of Godmanhood, even Russia's history and political system lost their one-sided negative character², on the other hand, a certain crisis

¹ In the conversation of Stavrogin with Kirillov, which is perhaps worth recalling at this point, for in it the whole complexity and the tragedy of opposition are expressed, as is the temptation to put oneself behind man-god; Stavrogin begins:

– *So you learnt you are good man?*

– *Yes, good.*

– *You have it then – murmured Stavrogin cheerlessly.*

– *He who brings men to understand that they are good, will bring the world to end.*

– *The one that did teach that was crucified.*

– *He will come, and his name will be Man-God.*

– *God-man?*

– *No. Man-God, in this – all difference.*

(F. Dostoyevski, *Biesy* [*Devils*], translated into Polish by T. Zagórski and Z. Podgórzec, Warszawa 1977, p. 233 [retranslated from the Polish]).

² This is not to say that Slavophiles (especially of the classic form of Slavophilism), and particularly not Solovyov, were advocates of the social political order in Russia in their times or the pro-state ideology under

of Western civilisation preached by Europe's brilliant minds, could be perceived in the perspective of Russian culture and religiousness as a cultural and social event, rather than an eschatological one: as a crisis, and not as the end.

i) As the opposite of the idea of man-god, Godmanhood is not a refutation of humanism; it points precisely to the *commensurability* of what is divine with what is human. This means the necessary manifestation of god in man, and, at the same time, a human capacity for elevation such that is in position to go beyond subjectiveness and stand up to the inevitability of transcendence¹. In the Godmanhood formula we are dealing with god's supremacy (the divinity of man is conditioned, and possible, solely owing to god's humanity), yet at the same time it reflects such a level of sophistication that constantly threatens to slip into modernist humanism or pantheism (the humanity of god is exposed to risk and a temptation of human error, heroism, despair and sentimentalism). Divine unity (uniqueness) strives for affirmation in differentiation (concreteness); natural diversity (particularity) strives for justification in unity (universality) – which is nothing else than a postulate of unity of truth and freedom; moreover, in that unity there is no way identifying one factor as dominant; there is no saying if truth exists thanks to freedom or freedom owes its existence to truth. The unity of truth and freedom, which at the same time betokens the fulfilment of both truth and freedom, is thus a permanently split unity, and not in a vertical dimension (as something above something else) but in a horizontal dimension (as something side by side an indispensable something).

j) Only now, following the characteristics mentioned up to now, can we indicate and ascribe to Godmanhood that feature which most students of Solovyov's thought tend to ascribe to the idea. The idea itself tends to be viewed as either a first-rate idea or as one that is identical with, or even superior to, the idea of Godmanhood. One such feature is *wholeness* (all-unity). Indeed, the idea of Godmanhood opens a perspective for a wholistic vision of the world where the remotest metaphysical poles of that world turn out to be its meaningful elements, moments, or else measures, of the whole. It is at the same time a whole such that does not reduce its elements but brings them to a transformation such which is their farthest fulfilment at the same time. The dynamism and concreteness of that unity (unity of god and man) can be expressed only by paradoxical formulas such as: *the whole of the whole and its*

the banners of *Orthodox religion*, autocracy, *nationality*. Indeed, sometimes they were pestered by the authorities of whom they were their often outspoken critics (cf. J. Dobieszewski, *Iwan Kiriejewski. Kształtowanie się myśli słowiańfilskiej* [Ivan Kireyevski. *The development of Slavophilic thought*] in: *Studia filozoficzne* 10/1987, pp. 11–44; J. Dobieszewski, *Słowianofilstwo Konstantina Aksakowa* [Konstantin Aksakov's Slavophilism] in: *Rosja XIX i XX wieku. Studia i szkice*, (ed.) J. Sobczak, Olsztyn 1998, pp. 35–57). The fact that Slavophilism tends to call forth mixed feelings among the general public is attributable to a superficial approach to it which equates it with its degenerate form of the period of the 1860s to 1890s; with Solovyov being the most radical and most prominent critic of that degeneration of the idea.

¹ A. Besançon puts up an opposition between elevation, with its proper subjectivism and narcissism (and being specifically Christian in no way), and objectivism and the grace of mystical experience (I am quoting from the Polish version of the article by A. Besançon, *O wzniosłości chrześcijańskiej* [On Christian elevation], transl. H. Woźniakowski, published in the journal *Znak* 505, 1997, pp. 17–20). It seems that Solovyov did not necessarily view these two types of experience as being in opposition all the time.

parts, the unity of unity and diversity, the community of community and particularity (of individual, personality), the identity of identity and non-identity. If we are ascribing wholism to the idea of Godmanhood only at this point, then in a belief that that only after we pointed to the inner tension, duality, differentiation and dynamics implicit in the idea of Godmanhood and in the reality marked (or postulated) by the idea, the feature of wholism will be manifest in the right, and not reducing, shape.

The overcoming of the stage of religious development of humanity Solovoy outlined in the article *The mythological process in ancient paganism*, required that man must be seen as a spiritual being, and one way of realising that postulate were philosophical-religious theories. In religion man attained a capacity of distancing himself from his temporality, yet he also could not keep such distance in himself – he transferred the negation of temporality entirely on God and either he faced the absolute gulf between himself and God or else multiplied his temporality exponentially, adding to that natural necessity an additional, divine, legitimacy. Both figures meant essentially a negation of religion. Philosophy turned up in that situation as a dual saviour. First, it is an expression of such distance of man towards his temporality, which distance is maintained inside man creating a world of thought and freedom, and thus the world of man's spirituality; so it is in philosophy that man really liberates (liberates *himself*) from his temporality. Secondly, as it creates the space of man's spirituality, and thus of the space of thought, freedom and – let us add – autonomy (individuality) of the human being, philosophy succours man's threatened religiousness. Even though the relationship between philosophy and religion is one of tension, dynamics, intellectual and anti-intellectual temptations, it is certainly not a relationship of initial, definitional, mutual exclusion. Solovyov's writings thereafter will present themselves as a convincing attempt to articulate just that.